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The Call of the (Art) Mall

Posted by Leah Sandals



Whenever I visit my dad in South Florida, we go to the [Aventura Mall](#). It's a long story, but basically my dad loves shopping. Love might be too weak a word, actually, but it gives you a starting idea.

Interestingly, last time I was there I found something to love too—the mall's [contemporary art program](#). Now this program does not mess around. There's work by artstars like [Julian Opie](#), [Lawrence Weiner](#), [Louise Bourgeois](#) and [Jorge Pardo](#). Yes, a bit bizarre.

In any case, I'm always interested to see this melding between the private-cum-public marketplace of the mall and collaborations with artists.

Here in Toronto, there's a similar project opening tonight, in fact: [Lyla Rye's Kiosk](#) at [Fairview Mall](#). The opening kicks off a future series of art works in the mall called Encounters with Art. Says the press release:

Kiosk is a video sculpture designed to resemble an empty mall kiosk. Although empty of objects for sale, it is filled with desire in the form of two projected videos. In these videos, a woman arranges objects for display in increasingly unusual ways provoking questions about why we choose to display only certain objects. The manner of filming causes her to merge with the kiosk.

Kiosk is on exhibit on the Lower level of Fairview Mall near H&M until April 12, 2009. Fairview Mall is directly accessible by the Yonge-Sheppard subway and attracts 15 million visitors annually.

Commissioned as the inaugural installment of the Encounters with Art series, Rye's Kiosk was selected from a shortlist of artists by a panel including curatorial advisor, Gordon Hatt. The Encounters with Art series presents contemporary art to the general populace within the framework of a shopping centre. By commissioning site specific work within a familiar setting, the series challenges people's perception of art.

Generously supported by Cinema Stage, Sanyo, and Spring Rolls by Thai Pan.

You may recall Hatt as the [Zone A curator for this year's Nuit Blanche](#), the guy who brought in [Blinkenlights](#) and the [dropped-ceiling alleyway](#) by BGL. Or maybe you don't remember. In any case, the opening is from 6 to 9 tonight at the mall's Spring Rolls. BYO-Dad.

Image of Lyla Rye's Kiosk from OCAD

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